

**CITY OF SAN DIEGO
M E M O R A N D U M**

DATE: January 18, 2006
TO: Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee
FROM: William M. Lansdowne, Chief of Police
SUBJECT: Police Department Status Report

For the past several years, the San Diego Police Department has made every possible effort to provide superior services to the citizens of San Diego despite having fewer sworn police positions per thousand population than most major metropolitan cities. San Diego ranks as the seventh largest metropolitan city in the United States and has the lowest violent crime rate, according to Department of Justice statistics (2004). This distinction has been achieved despite several years of lean budgets and staffing shortages. Still, the Department is able to provide high levels of service with fewer resources.

The Department's attrition rate has been increasing at a steady rate due to retirements and resignations. So far this fiscal year, resignations of officers have outnumbered retirements 45 to 35. Twenty-three of the resigning officers have left for employment with other law enforcement agencies. Resignations of civilian workers have outnumbered retirements 19 to 7. The number of qualified officer candidates applying for the Department has also decreased making it difficult to replace personnel lost through attrition. Additionally, many candidates are leaving during the Department's hiring process and are opting to go to work for other agencies.

Despite budget and hiring challenges, the Department has completed, or is in the process of completing, some major projects. These include:

- Upgrading the Regional Communications system;
- Purchasing four new police helicopters;
- Establishing a Crisis Response Team and providing specialized training to reduce the use of deadly force;
- Purchasing new police vehicles, including a new SWAT Special Equipment Vehicle;
- Opening a new Police Vehicle Maintenance Facility;
- Creating a centralized Auto Theft Unit;
- Constructing the Northwestern Division station; and,
- Obtaining Homeland Security grants to purchase equipment and provide training for Department personnel.

Many maintenance issues, equipment purchases and capital improvement projects have been deferred, some for several years, pending the availability of funding. This deferral of maintenance, equipment purchases and capital improvement projects continues to build both in cost and urgency.

Five-Year Plan

In an effort to prepare for future growth in population and the corresponding increase in resources required to maintain the level of services currently provided to the citizens of San Diego, the Police Department has developed a Five-Year Plan. The plan outlines five key operational goals and identifies the associated needs and funding necessary to accomplish these goals through fiscal year 2011.

I. Rebuilding the Organization

Police Department sworn and civilian staffing has experienced increased demands and accelerated attrition. This goal outlines major milestones for returning the Department to budgeted staffing levels through FY 2011. The milestones include:

Patrol Staffing

- Bring sworn staffing to budgeted levels (2,102) and fully fund by start of FY 2008;
- Include costs to train recruits in budget;
- Project anticipated growth for five years through FY 2011; and,
- Implement a Hire-Ahead program by start of FY 2009.

Civilian Staffing

- Bring civilian staffing to budgeted FY 2003 levels and fully fund by start of FY 2008;
- Establish a sworn officer to civilian staffing ratio of 3:1 by start of FY 2009; and,
- Maintain the 3:1 sworn officer to civilian ratio through FY 2011.

Investigative Staffing

- Establish acceptable ratios of total sworn to investigative staff by start of FY 2009; and,
- Maintain acceptable sworn to investigative ratios through FY 2011.

II. Re-institute Equipment Replacement Schedule

This section of the plan details equipment items that are necessary for the effective operation of the Department. These equipment items include vehicles, radios, pagers, cell phones, ballistic vests, tasers and other miscellaneous patrol and investigations-related equipment. By the start of FY 2008, the Department expects to have replacement schedules in place for equipment and vehicles.

III. Address Under Funding Practices

Given the financial state of the City, sufficient funds have not been available to support the Department's sworn and civilian employees as they work to provide many of its basic services. The Police Department is planning to incrementally procure full funding for all personnel and non-personnel expenses as follows:

- All specialty pays by start of FY 2008;
- All overtime by start of FY 2009; and,
- Maintain full funding through FY 2011.

IV. Develop Programs to Evaluate and Implement New Technology into the Organization

The Five-Year Plan details four primary efforts that are meant to keep the Police Department current with advances in law enforcement related technology through FY 2011. The areas of focus are:

- Upgrading public safety communications system;
- Developing partnerships with other agencies;
- SDPD becoming a test bed for new technologies; and,
- Exploiting existing technologies and use to the fullest extent.

V. Develop New Facilities to Support Operations

Currently, the majority of the Department's facilities are at capacity with regard to the availability of office space for existing Police Department employees. Assuming the number of Department employees increases as predicted in the Five-Year Plan over the next five years, the expansion of existing Police facilities and, possibly, the development of new Police facilities must be evaluated to accommodate these additional employees.

In addition to expanding and/or developing new facilities to support population and projected Departmental growth, the following new facilities and maintenance issues are priorities for the Department through FY 2011.

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- Rebuild Police Pistol Range;
- New Property Storage Facility;
- Permanent Canine/SWAT Facility;
- Public Safety Training Institute; and,
- Address Deferred Maintenance Issues.

The Police Department is committed to providing the highest level of services to the citizens of San Diego. The attached Briefing Report contains some of the issues the Department is currently facing, as well as a roadmap designed to reach desired staffing levels, repair and replace equipment and facilities, and elevate our Department to the level necessary to continue to provide these services.



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